



# THE REGULATORS' FIELD



## *A Lesson for the Defeated*



### CAROLINAS CAMPAIGN

The Carolinas Campaign began on February 1, 1865, when Union Gen. William T. Sherman led his army north from Savannah, Georgia, after the March to the Sea. Sherman's objective was to join Gen. Ulysses S. Grant in Virginia to crush Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Scattered Confederate forces consolidated in North Carolina, the Confederacy's logistical lifeline, where Sherman defeated Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's last-ditch attack at Bentonville. After Sherman was reinforced at Goldsboro late in March, Johnston saw the futility of further resistance and surrendered at Bennett Place near Durham on April 26, ending the Civil War in the East.

Confederate Gen. William J. Hardee led Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's southern column of the Army of Tennessee through Alamance County on April 15, 1865, marching west away from Union Gen. William

T. Sherman's army. After a wet march and the loss of several soldiers drowned at river crossings, the lead elements of Hardee's column bivouacked here in the mud.

Adding to the misery was the confirmation of Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on April 9. Rumors of catastrophe in Virginia had spread while the column bivouacked the previous night in Chapel Hill on the grounds of the University of North Carolina. Here, however, the officers and men got irrefutable proof that the rumors were true: parolees from the Army of Northern Virginia going home from Appomattox.

Capt. William E. Stoney, assistant adjutant general of Hagood's South Carolina Brigade, recorded in the brigade diary, "Tonight, Colonel [Charles H.] Olmstead, of the First Georgia Regiment, tells me positively that *General Lee has surrendered*. Great God! Can it be true? I have never for a moment doubted the ultimate success of our cause. I cannot believe it."

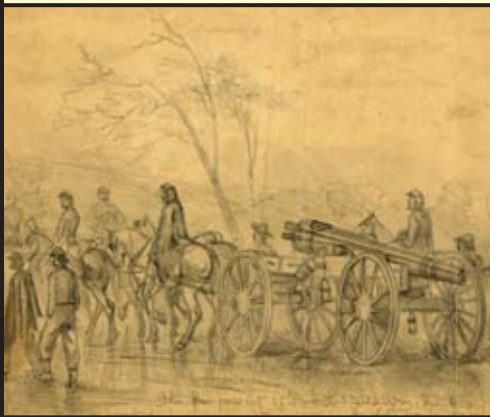
This ground, where Hardee's men received the historic news, was a renowned local landmark. In April four years earlier, local Unionists planned a flag rally at the old



Gen. William J. Hardee – Courtesy Library of Congress

On May 16, 1771, Gov. William Tryon led 1,200 militiamen here and defeated the frontier rebels called the Regulators, who protested high taxes and lack of legal recourse. The North Carolina troops who bivouacked here in April 1865 would have known the story of the governor's treatment of the rebels after the battle—six local men "stretched hemp" in Hillsborough for their "treason."

Regulator Battlefield at Alamance Creek, but the firing on Fort Sumter and President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops derailed its symbolic purpose. Few attended.



Army marching in the rain – Courtesy Library of Congress